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PAGE 01 BANGKO 06795 040345Z

19

ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 USIE-00 PM-05 NSC-10
SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 P-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC
COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6795

SUBJECT: U.S. SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 6794

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY.

BEGIN QUOTE

THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARINGS ON THAILAND HELD BY THE U.S. SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES SECURITY AGREEMENTS AND COMMITMENTS ABROAD OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED. THIS SUB-COMMITTEE IS UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SENATOR STUART SYMINGTON OF MISSOURI AND IS POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE SYMINGTON SUB-COMMITTEE.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE WAS CONSTITUTED, IN THE WORDS OF SENATOR SYMINGTON, "... TO BUILD A DETAILED RECORD OF THE SECURITY UNDERSTANDINGS AND THE UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OVERSEAS WHICH CONSTITUTE THE CURRENT COMPLEX SERIES OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN LABELED 'COMMITMENTS'." IN ADDITION TO THAILAND THE SUB-COMMITTEE HAS HELD HEARINGS ON OUR RELATIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINES, LAOS AND THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. THE SUB-COMMITTEE

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 06795 040345Z

PLANS TO HOLD ADDITIONAL HEARINGS ON OTHER COUNTRIES.

THESE HEARINGS ARE A NORMAL PART OF THE UNITED STATES' GOVERNMENTAL PROCEDURE. AS REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE THE CONGRESS PLAYS A ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND PROVIDES THE FUNDS WITH WHICH TO IMPLEMENT IT. CONSEQUENTLY MEMBERS OF OUR CONGRESS MUST BE INFORMED NOT ONLY ON THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF U.S. MISSIONS ABROAD, BUT ALSO THE POLICIES OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS IMPORTANT AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS. THE CONGRESSMEN NEED THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION SO THEY MAY PROPERLY DISCHARGE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE UNDER THE CONSTITUTION.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXAMINED IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THAILAND, PARTICULARLY OVER THE SEATO TREATY OF 1954 AND THE REAFFIRMATION IN 1962 BY FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT AND SECRETARY RUSK THAT THE OBLIGATIONS IN THE TREATY ARE INDIVIDUAL AS WELL AS COLLECTIVE. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE U.S. USE OF FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE U.S. CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IN THAILAND. THE SENATORS WERE MOST INTERESTED IN THE COMMUNIST TERRORIST PROBLEM AND IN ANY RELATION IT MIGHT HAVE TO THE PRESENCE OF U.S. TROOPS IN THAILAND.

WITH REGARD TO THE GENERAL POSTURE OF THE U.S. OVERSEAS, SEVERAL OF THE SENATORS EXPLAINED THEIR VIEW THAT THE U.S. IS OVEREXTENDED ABROAD AND SPENDING MORE MONEY THAN IT CAN AFFORD. THEY WERE ASKING WHETHER OTHER NATIONS WERE MAKING A CONTRIBUTION COMENSURATE WITH THAT OF THE U.S. AND SUGGESTING THAT PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. DEMAND A REORDERING OF PRIORITIES. SEVERAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS FELT THAT OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS THERE HAS BEEN INSUFFICIENT EXECUTIVE BRANCH CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS AND THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE SEATO COMMITMENT MAY HAVE BEEN STRETCHED BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL INTENT. THEY FELT ALSO THAT THE PUBLIC HAS NOT BEEN FULLY ENOUGH INFORMED ABOUT THE NATURE OF SOME OPERATIONS. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN OUR SUPPORT FOR THE ROYAL LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT AND TOUCHED ON MANY MATTERS WHICH WERE ALSO THE SUBJECT OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S SUBSEQUENT STATEMENT ON MARCH 6 OF THIS YEAR.

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 06795 040345Z

AS TO THAILAND, SOME SENATORS WERE FEARFUL THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF U.S. TROOPS IN THAILAND MIGHT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THAI-US RELATIONS OR LEAD TO OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THAILAND'S INSURGENCY PROBLEMS, OR THAT THE MAJOR U.S. MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM BEGINNING IN 1965 MIGHT RESULT IN THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH AN INVOLVEMENT. SOME SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS WISHED TO STUDY CLOSELY THE INCREASES IN OUR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AFTER 1965 AND THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THESE.

THE PUBLISHED TRANSCRIPT, ALTHOUGH EDITED FOR SECURITY REASONS, PROVIDES A VERY FULL PICTURE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAI-US RELATIONS SINCE 1950 AND GIVES CONSIDERABLE INFORMATION ON THE NATURE OF U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THIS COUNTRY. THE RECORD DEMONSTRATES THAT THE REASON FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF AMERICAN FORCES NOW IN THAILAND WAS TO PROSECUTE THE WAR IN VIETNAM AND LAOS. IT SPELLS OUT IN GREAT DETAIL THE FACT THAT, CONSISTENT WITH ITS SEATO OBLIGATIONS, THAILAND HAS MADE A VERY BASIC AND SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROSECUTION OF THAT CONFLICT BY PROVIDING READY ACCESS TO A LARGE NUMBER OF THAI-OWNED FACILITIES AS WELL AS AN IMPORTANT TROOP CONTRIBUTION TO VIETNAM. THE NATURE OF U.S. SUPPORT TO THE THAI EFFORT IN VIETNAM IS ALSO DISCUSSED AS ARE THE COSTS TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT OF THIS CONTRIBUTION. THE U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF THE THAI EFFORT TO ELIMINATE COMMUNIST TERRORISM IS SPELLED OUT IN GREAT DETAIL. IT IS MADE QUITE CLEAR THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE ACTUAL PROSECUTION OF THE CI EFFORT A THAI RESPONSIBILITY ALTHOUGH IT WELCOMES ADVICE AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM THE U.S.

IN SUMMARY THE TRANSCRIPT REFLECTS THE VIEWS AND SOME CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE AND PROVIDES AN HISTORICAL RECORD OF US-THAI RELATIONS, A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN THIS COUNTRY, TOGETHER WITH A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION ON THAILAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

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